

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-10 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DHA-02 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 OC-05

CCO-00 SCCT-01 ACDA-05 OMB-01 AID-05 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

SCA-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /115 W

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O P 131135Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6616

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLD VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12687

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: SECURITY IMPROVES AGAIN IN BEIRUT -- IS PEACE AT HAND?

REF: BEIRUT 12658 (11 OCT 75 1115Z)

SUMMARY: BEIRUT WAS CALMER OVER THE WEEKEND THAN DURING PRECEDING WEEK, AND SPONTANEOUS RECONCILIATION BETWEEN TWO OF HOTTEST QUARTERS IS HOPEFUL SIGN. BUT NO CITY-WIDE RECONCILIATION HAS YET OCCURRED, AS SHOOTING PERSISTS IN SOME AREAS. BUSINESS TAKING WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE. NORTH LEBANON REMAINS TENSE BUT IS REPORTED QUIET AS OF 1000 HOURS (LOCAL) TODAY OCT 13. BOTH "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" AND GOL CABINET MEET TODAY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE RECONCILIATION NOTED REFTTEL BETWEEN CHIYAH (SHIITE) AND AIN EL-RAMANNEH (MOSTLY CHRISTIAN), TWO OF THE HOTTEST QUARTERS OF BEIRUT DURING PAST FEW WEEKS, RECEIVED VERY WIDE COVERAGE IN PRESS ON SUNDAY. LARGELY SPONTANEOUS, IT IS WIDELY REGARDED AS ONE OF MOST HOPEFUL DEVELOPMENTS OF PAST FEW WEEKS. HOWEVER, IT HAS NOT YET SNOWBALLED INTO GENERAL RECONCILIATION CITY-WIDE. CLASHES WERE AT CONSIDERABLY REDUCED LEVEL THROUGHOUT WEEKEND BUT CONTINUED SPORADICALLY. SECURITY FORCES SUCCEEDED IN DISMANTLING MOST BARRICADES IN CHIYAH AND AIN EL-RUMANNEH SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, BUT BARRICADES REMAIN ELSEWHERE. SECURITY FORCES MAY ATTEMPT DISMANTLING IN NABA TODAY, OCT 13.

2. AS OF 1000 HOURS (LOCAL) TODAY, BEIRUT IS GENERALLY CALM, BUT SHOOTING PERSISTS IN SOME EAST BEIRUT AND SURBURBAN QUARTERS. TRAFFIC IS HEAVY IN COMMERCIAL AREAS.

3. BUSINESS AND BANKING COMMUNITY HAS TAKEN WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE TOWARD DIMINUTION OF HOSTILITIES.
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MERCHANTS ASSOCIATIONS HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT SECURITY CONDITIONS DO NOT PERMIT A GENERAL ADVISORY TO MEMBERS ABOUT WHETHER TO REOPEN, AND MATTER IS BEING LEFT TO DISCRETION OF INDIVIDUAL SHOPKEEPERS. SHOPS ARE INTERMITTENTLY OPEN TODAY. BANK OF AMERICA IS OPEN, BUT OTHER BANKS MAY REOPEN TOMORROW IF LULL HOLDS. GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS IS TO REACH DECISION TODAY ABOUT ADVISING WORKERS TO

RETURN TO JOBS.

4. BECAUSE OF LIGHT LOADS, PANAM HAS CUT FIVE OF FOURTEEN WEEKLY 747 STOPOVERS, AND FOUR OF EIGHT WEEKLY 707 STOPOVERS UNTIL OCT 31, AND IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE SOME SCHEDULE REDUCTIONS THROUGH NOV 30. SEVERAL OTHER AIRLINES HAVE REDUCED OR ELIMINATED BEIRUT SERVICE. (DETAILS BY SEPTTEL.)

5. IMPROVEMENT OF SECURITY HAS ALLOWED TANK TRUCKS TO DELIVER DIESEL FUEL FROM MEDRECO REFINERY NEAR SIDON, THUS REPLENSIHING SUPPLIES FOR HOSPITALS, BAKERIES AND OTHER ESSENTIAL SERVICES IN BEIRUT AREA. AS GASOLINE STOCKS ARE LOW, GASOLINE SHORTAGE MAY RESTRICT TRAFFIC WHATEVER THE SECURITY CONDITIONS UNTIL NEXT TANKER SHIP ARRIVES OCT 20. END OF LAST WEEK ROCKET HIT ZOUK ELECTRIC POWER GENERATING PLANT, ONE OF TWO SERVING BEIRUT AREA. EXTENT OF DAMAGE UNKNOWN, BUT ELECTRIC SERVICE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED.

6. THE TRIPOLI-ZGHORTA REGION EXPERIENCED RENEWED FIGHTING OVER THE WEEKEND. IT IS REPORTEDLY QUIET NOW, AFTER NEW CEASEFIRE TOOK HOLD ABOUT 0430 HOURS (LOCAL) THIS MORNING. SITUATION STILL TENSE.

7. THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" IS SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE AT 1100 HOURS (LOCAL) TODAY. THE TOUCHY ISSUE OF PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON MAY COME UP, PERHAPS IN CONTEXT OF DISCUSSING UPCOMING ARAB LEAGUE MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS IN CAIRO. THIS COULD SPARK A LIVELY EXCHANGE BETWEEN PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE
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GEMAYEL, WHO SEEKS TO PUT PALESTINIAN QUESTION ON AGENDA, AND LEFTIST LEADER KAMAL JUMBLATT, WHO CONSIDERS THE TOPIC INAPPROPRIATE TO "DIALOGUE".

8. THE CABINET WILL MEET TODAY AT 1600 HOURS (LOCAL). IT IS EXPECTED TO NAME A DEL THAT WOULD STAND READY TO ACCOMPANY FONMIN TAQLA TO THE CAIRO MEETING.
GODLEY

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